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FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Morning Edition

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SUBJECT Why Terpil Called Jim Hogan

BOB EDWARDS: This week, we've heard a series of reports on Frank Terpil, and ex-CIA officer and international arms dealer.

In the early 1970's, Terpil left the Central Intelligence Agency to work for himself. He sold arms and explosives to terrorists and set up a terrorist training school in Turkey.

Three years ago, Terpil fled the United States to avoid prosecution. He's been on the run ever since. A few months ago, Terpil telephone reporter Jim Hogan. The two men met for a series of talks. I asked Hogan why Terpil agreed to be interviewed.

JIM HOGAN: Terpil has no good reason to speak with me or anyone else for publication or anything else, and his motives for doing so are totally obscure. I think he's lonely. I think that's one of the aspects of being a fugitive, and I'm one of the few journalists who interviewed him before he became a fugitive. So, he wanted to talk to somebody and he had my phone number.

And I think he's got some gripes, too.

EDWARDS: At whom?

HOGAN: Well, at the criminal justice system, at the CIA, State Department, military defense establishment, his ex-wife, and so on and so forth.

EDWARDS: And he laid out a magnificent confession, really, to be used against him.

HOGAN: Yes. If they ever catch him. He does not believe that, in fact, he will be caught, and everything he does is predicated on that. It's kind of strange because you think of Frank Terpil as some sort of super spook, the only one in the crowd that's still at large, false passports, disguises, and so on and so forth. It's not like that.

His idea of a false passport is to carry something identifying him as Yokio Tomoto of Japan, you know, and he fakes it.

EDWARDS: [Laughs].

HOGAN: He's a spy.

EDWARDS: What's the credibility of a man like that? I mean, why should we believe him?

HOGAN: Well, I don't think he has any reason to lie. In a sense, he's beyond lying. Now whether Terpil exaggerates things, whether he conjectures and tries to put things together, I'm not sure. Certainly, he's trying to understand his own life. He's got a lot of time for reflection. That's all he's got is time, and he's trying to understand what it was that he did and what part he played in this larger puzzle, this larger problem.

EDWARDS: We know what Terpil and his pal, Ed Wilson, did with their skills that they learned in the CIA, and yet you say that it's not uncommon for CIA agents to go into business after they've left the service. To what legitimate business can one put his or her skills as a CIA agent?

HOGAN: Well, these guys are trained in a lot of things. They're trained in some kinds of political analysis. They're trained in security measures. They're skilled at foreign languages, and so on and so forth.

They'd be hired by Fortune 500 firms, such as Ford, to deal with -- perhaps deal with labor strikes, McDonalds Corporation has hired them. What you're dealing with is....

EDWARDS: The spy and burger king?

HOGAN: Exactly. [Laughs]. What you're dealing with is thousands of people in the intelligence community. I think the number is something like 140,000 who work for the Federal Government in some intelligence aspect and, naturally, they

retire, and some of them are in their 40's; they've spent 20 years in the government; where do they go? They set up shop on their own. Most of them very legitimately.

EDWARDS: How many would do what Terpil and Wilson did?

HOGAN: I don't think you can put a number on it. It would just be a guess.

EDWARDS: What can we do about it? What can Congress do, for example, to put checks on what's really a secret agency to make certain that you don't have future Terpils and Wilsons?

HOGAN: Well, I think -- I think they can do absolutely nothing. I've thought about it a lot, and one can come up with motions for legislation and say that there should be more rigid guidelines for hiring people, and so on and so forth, but I think the CIA, FBI, Defense Intelligence Agency do their best to vet these people -- the people that they hire. But, inevitably, they're going to get -- they're going to hire people -- a few people inadvertently whose characters are subject to exorelaxation, or whatever you want to call.

EDWARDS: You have journalistic responsibility that protects your sources, but Terpil's a bad number. Terpil's been involved with murder. But don't you have a higher responsibility to turn him in?

HOGAN: No.

EDWARDS: Why not?

HOGAN: Well, I don't see my job as that of a cop. Secondly, I don't see myself as an informer. I see myself as an investigative reporter.

EDWARDS: So there he is, out to do whatever mayhem he wants to do.

HOGAN: Well, it's a practical matter, too. He's traveling around the Mideast and parts of the Caribbean, Central Europe. It's impractical. I mean, if INTERPOL can't get, if the CIA can't get him, how can anyone else? How can individual? And why should he? That would represent, also, I think, betrayal.

A reporter is, I think, what? He's not an active participant, or shouldn't be an active participant in the things he reports on.

EDWARDS: Jim Hogan. His interviews with Frank Terpil also appear in this month's "Penthouse" magazine.